



# Virginia Conservation Police

## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

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Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries  
Law Enforcement Division  
7870 Villa Park Drive, Suite 400  
Henrico VA 23228



*“Be it enacted (March 11, 1916) by the general assembly of Virginia, That a State Department of game and inland fisheries is hereby created, and established.....”*



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Executive Director  
Ryan Brown

## Message from the Director

I am delighted to have the opportunity to write this opening message for the Virginia Conservation Police Annual Report.

This agency's dedicated officers accomplish so much for our wildlife and public. Whether enforcing wildlife and boating laws and regulations, serving as ambassadors to the public, or otherwise promoting all that the agency and Virginia's outdoors have to offer, our Conservation Police Officers are at the forefront of what the agency does every day.

Over the course of my first year, I have been happy to have a small part in expanding our K9 program, which provides immense service to us both in enforcement and public relations. We are taking a major step forward in seeking accreditation through the Department of Criminal Justice Services, and completing this process is a major priority for both myself and our Board. As are efforts to enhance our retention and promote career progression for our officers.

During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, our Conservation Police Officers have been integral in helping the agency maintain its offerings to the public. The outdoors has truly served as one of the few escapes that the public has, and helping ensure that they do so in a safe and responsible manner would not be possible without the assistance of law enforcement. This has been a time when the agency has shined in public service, due in no small part to the efforts of our women and men in uniform.



Each and every day, on the land and on the water, our Conservation Police Officers protect the public and our natural resources, and make the agency proud with their work. It is a privilege to work alongside each of them in carrying out the agency's mission. This report contains but a snapshot of their many accomplishments throughout the past year.

Ryan Brown

Executive Director

## Message from the Majors

It is great to have an opportunity to update you on all that the law enforcement division has experienced over the last year. Probably our biggest change over the past year hinges around the new faces (or familiar faces in new positions) we have seen at DGIF. Of course, our new Director, Ryan Brown, comes to mind when we talk about change. Ryan isn't necessarily a new face to our agency, however the seat that he now occupies is certainly new for him and us. Director Brown has hit the ground running with a reinvigorated emphasis on our law enforcement division.

Sweeping improvements to our division that have been initiated and/or supported by our new Director include prioritizing Law Enforcement Accreditation, developing a career progression program for officers, and committing resources to help the division recruit and retain a more qualified, diverse, and inclusive team. We all look forward to continuing to work with Director Brown to make concerted improvements to our division.

The recent COVID pandemic has definitely taught our division a great deal about itself and reinforced much of what we already knew. The division is full of dedicated and sound officers who are committed to keeping the ship afloat and providing services to our constituents during this time of crisis. In August, our division held its first awards and recognition program where dozens of officers and support staff were recognized for their outstanding achievements, professionalism, and lifesaving heroics in front of the Board of DGIF, their peers, family, and agency senior leadership. We look forward to continuing this successful event in 2020.



Major Scott Naff  
Assistant Chief, Operations

Major Bryan Young  
Assistant Chief, Administration



Finally, we want to share that our agency underwent a JLARC audit in 2019. Like most audits, there were identified items that the JLARC committee noted could be improved. These recommendations included creating a career progression plan for CPOs, promoting a Colonel to lead the division, and following through with law enforcement accreditation, to name a few. The agency and division are committed to following through with many of these recommendations. We address this audit to highlight one of the most important parts of the JLARC report that we do not want to go unnoticed. Quoting directly from the JLARC summary, "Members of

the public, when asked by JLARC, characterized conservation police officers (CPOs) as professional and helpful. Ninety-four percent reported that the CPO with whom they interacted operated in a professional

manner; 83 percent reported that when requesting assistance, the CPO was helpful." We try to remind ourselves, our management, and our agency of this important fact daily. Many of you have known for years that the findings of the JLARC are not just a sign of the times, or representative of the officers and staff we have now. The fact is, our division is entrenched and built on a history of professionalism, caring, helpfulness, and commitment. These words and descriptions have accurately described our division for many years thanks to the commitment, integrity, and work ethic of our great staff that have made this division one of, if not the, best natural resources law enforcement organizations in our great country.



## 1.0 Mission Summary

Virginia Conservation Police Officers operate within the Law Enforcement Division of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF). The mission of the Law Enforcement Division is to preserve law and order; to enforce applicable criminal and regulatory laws in a fair and impartial manner; to provide education and outreach in an effort to gain voluntary compliance with and promote public understanding and support of the Commonwealth's wildlife, fish and boat laws and regulations; to work in concert with other Agency divisions in accomplishing the Agency's mission; to provide responsive, coordinated services to the citizens of the Commonwealth in a professional, efficient manner.



Conservation Police Officers focus their patrol efforts on enforcing the wildlife, fishing, and boating laws and regulations of Virginia. They utilize specialized law enforcement techniques and equipment to promote compliance, address criminal activity, and preserve public safety. Because of their knowledge and professionalism, officers are often called upon to assist other state and local agencies with various enforcement endeavors. Whether instructing a Hunter Education class, tracking a violent offender through remote terrain, or

providing law enforcement services in the wake of a natural disaster, Conservation Police Officers are dedicated to serving the citizens of the Commonwealth. The protection of Virginia's vast natural resources is a great undertaking. The Commonwealth is comprised of 95 counties, 38 independent cities, and a total area of 39,490 square miles. In 2019, Virginia was home to an estimated 8,535,519 citizens. From the Coastal shores, to the rolling hills of the Piedmont region, to the peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Virginia's topography is as diverse as its population. There are 371 rivers or creeks and 27 major lakes to explore. DGIF also owns or manages 220 boat ramps to provide users with access to public waters. For the trout angler, Virginia contains over 3,500 miles of trout streams which includes over 2,900 miles of wild trout waters. Hunting and outdoors enthusiasts can recreate on the over 1.6 million acres of National Forest land found in Virginia. Additionally, there are 25 State Forests totaling over 69,441 acres managed by the Virginia Department of Forestry and 46 Wildlife Management Areas totaling over 203,000 acres managed by the DGIF.



## 2.0 Administrative

### 2.1 Staffing



At the close of 2019, the Law Enforcement Division had 157 Conservation Police Officers including 121 non-supervisory field officers, 22 Sergeants, 6 Lieutenants, 6 Captains and 2 Majors. All were fully certified officers through the Department of Criminal Justice Services, with the authority to enforce all of the laws of Virginia. As Deputy US Fish and Wildlife Special Agents, they may conduct investigations and cross state lines when violations of federal wildlife laws have been committed. The Law Enforcement Division is also supported by 17 full-time and 3 part-time civilian positions which include dispatchers, administrative assistants, asset managers, records, and IT staff. Table 1 looks at the number of full-time sworn and support staff over the past five years.

**Table 1: Law Enforcement Salaried (Full-time) Staffing from 2015 to 2019**

DESCRIPTION	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
CPO (Recruit and non-supervisory)	114	133	122	130	121
SERGEANT	24	24	17	26	22
LIEUTENANT	3	3	5	5	6
CAPTAIN	4	4	6	6	6
MAJOR/LT. COLONEL/COLONEL	1	2	2	2	2
<b>SWORN SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>157</b>
DISPATCH	8	8	8	9	9
ADMIN/OFFICE	7	8	8	7	7
IT SUPPORT	1	1	1	1	1
<b>SUPPORT SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>TOTAL SWORN/SUPPORT (FULL-TIME)</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>174</b>

## 2.2 Budget

For most of this annual report, discussions revolve around calendar year reporting, which is not the case with budgets. State budgets operate on a fiscal year schedule from July 1 to June 30. The following lists an overview of the Law Enforcement Division's budget for the past three fiscal years - FY20 (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020), FY19 (July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019), and FY18 (July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018):

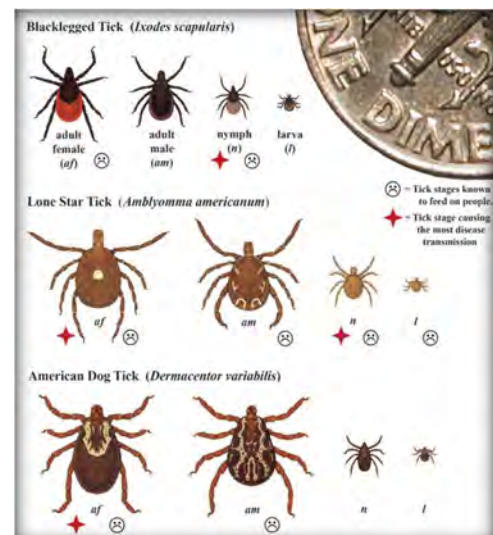


Law Enforcement Budget	FY18	FY19	FY20
<b>Personnel Costs</b>	<b>\$16,403,892</b>	<b>\$16,239,511</b>	<b>\$16,195,852</b>
<b>Non-personnel Costs</b>	<b>\$4,344,628</b>	<b>\$3,844,072</b>	<b>\$3,948,906</b>
<i>Operations</i>	<i>\$4,017,128</i>	<i>\$3,343,808</i>	<i>\$3,582,082</i>
<i>Holiday &amp; Overtime</i>	<i>\$327,500</i>	<i>\$500,264</i>	<i>\$366,824</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$20,748,520</b>	<b>\$20,083,583</b>	<b>\$20,144,758</b>

## 2.3 Officer Safety

In 2019, Law Division staff submitted 31 claims regarding workplace accidents, which show a 32% decrease from 2018. Improvements were noted in the number of reported tick bites and the number of reported strains. It is important to note that during 2019 no law enforcement academy was conducted which surely assisted with the improved numbers of submissions. Not surprisingly, tick bites are the top claim submitted by officers. With the increased presence of tick-borne diseases in the state of Virginia, officers are realizing the importance of reporting suspicious bites and utilizing all tick repellent measures available to them. The work of conservation police officers is highly stressful and physically demanding, oftentimes leading to strain-type injuries.

Claim Description	2018	2019
Tick Bites	22	11
Strains	16	5
Animal Bites	1	3
Punctures/Abrasions	3	7
Allergic Reactions	1	2
Other	1	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>31</b>



### 3.0 Office of Professional Standards

The mission of the Office of Professional Standards (O.P.S.) is to utilize the best law enforcement practices, combined with risk management principles, in order to provide the highest level of quality service and public trust. To assist in this endeavor, the primary purpose of the O.P.S. Advisory Council is to promote and set the example in terms of our **Professional Standards CREED** within the Law Enforcement Division of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.



#### **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS CREED**

Virginia Conservation Police (VCP) have a two-part creed regarding professional standards. Conservation Police Officers (CPO's) and law enforcement staff in our agency are expected to perform their public service with ethical core values. Furthermore, management and supervision are obligated to utilize best practices as their professional benchmark.

#### **CORE VALUES = Ethical Behavior and Code of Conduct:**

- I. Act with integrity*
- II. Render a high standard of public service*
- III. Perform in a way that promotes trust in our profession*
- IV. Treat others impartially with dignity and respect*
- V. Take responsibility for one's actions*

#### **PROFESSIONAL CRITERIA = Best Practices Management Model:**

- I. Create an inclusive, diverse and cohesive team environment to fulfill our agency mission*
- II. Provide both the strategic direction and the necessary tools to be successful*
- III. Follow accepted standards to measure our public service delivery system*
- IV. Employ proactive and collaborative efforts to enhance effectiveness and reduce risk*
- V. Communicate and implement change in a positive and constructive manner*

The O.P.S. Advisory Council consists of a fifteen-member team, which provides guidance and insight over recruitment/retention, training and administrative investigations. This Council will make recommendations to senior leadership utilizing the best practices of successful police operations. In addition, the Council will use acceptable standards to consistently measure our public service delivery system, and oversee a collaborative effort to address effectiveness issues and liability concerns, which require corrective action using agency staff and resources.

In 2019, council members included Tyler Blanks, Owen Bullard, John J. Cobb, Jason Culbertson, Greg Funkhouser, James H. Hale, Robert O. Ham, III, Randy Hickman, Rich Landers, Travis Murray, Tyler G. Sheets, Ryan M. Shuler, Jamie Slaughter, Joshua Thomas and Ronnie Warren.

*“There are obligations to treat staff fairly and to be seen as an employer of choice, thus the highest standards must be applied to internal processes as well.”*

Directorate of Professional Standards, London’s Metropolitan Police Service

### **O.P.S. ADVISORY COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- Serve as advisors and advocates for professional standards initiatives, including quality public service enhancements, to senior law enforcement leadership
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of public service and the effectiveness of strategies implemented to raise professional standards within the Law Enforcement Division
- Establish working relationships with other well-respected law enforcement agencies; Research and stay up-to-date on new law enforcement trends and case law
- Market and showcase the uniqueness of our law enforcement profession to include maintaining a Professional Standards Website for our constituents and the public
- Seek-out constructive citizen and staff feedback in order to identify deficiencies and discover new methods to reduce liability and enhance law enforcement operations
- Accept nominations from the field and approve their recommendations to formally honor Constituent Supporters with a numbered O.P.S. Protector Challenge Coin
- Facilitate and ensure the continuous and effective implementation of the Law Enforcement Employee Suggestion Program as well as maintaining those databases
- Accept nominations and make selections for the Professionalism Decree (CPO / Law Enforcement Staff Annual Recognitions) to include the award presentation.

**Go to our Professional Standards Webpage at:**  
[dgif.virginia.gov/ops](http://dgif.virginia.gov/ops)

### **CITIZEN FEEDBACK SYSTEM**

A centralized Citizen Feedback System and workflow went operational on May 25, 2018 in conjunction with the official launch of the Office of Professional Standards (O.P.S.) website: [dgif.virginia.gov/ops](http://dgif.virginia.gov/ops). This system was established within the Law Enforcement Division to collect, track and respond to all types of citizen feedback in the interest of quality public service. Officers and Staff were provided with both large and small informational printed cards to be given out to the public to obtain their feedback. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP’s) were initiated for handling feedback appropriately, by various positions.

In reference to Officer Commendations, the feedback system has allowed us to significantly increase the collection of positive interactions from the public's perspective with our officers and staff. In fact, from the beginning of this new system to the end of the first year (2018), we had a 286% increase in commendations. These records are now kept and maintained by O.P.S.

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#### **In Calendar Year 2019:**

- Recorded **196** Total Citizen Feedbacks
- Maintained a **5 to 1 ratio** of Officer Commendations to Officer Complaints

#### **Officer Commendations:**

- **161** total (94 of them through the website – about 2/3)
  - Region I – 36
  - Region II – 30
  - Region III – 36
  - Region IV – 36
  - Special Ops – 24
  - HQ - 1

#### **Officer Complaints:**

- **35** total (11 of them through the website - about 1/3)
- Driving related complaints were the most common (11 total)
- **11** complaints were received after a summons was issued and 5 were for criminal investigation harassment
- Region I - **7**; Region II - **14**; Region III - **3**; Region IV - **11**; and Special Ops / HQ's - **0**

#### **Final Dispositions:**

- **21** No Further Action
- **7** Verbal Counseling
- **3** Written Counseling
- **2** Unsubstantiated
- **2** Substantiated

### **Employee Suggestion Program (E.S.P.)**

The purpose of the Employee Suggestion Program is to utilize that segment of the Professional Standards Creed, which deals specifically with “management best practices”. In particular, going into the “*inclusive, diverse and cohesive team environment*” in order to “*employ proactive and collaborative efforts to enhance effectiveness and reduce risk*”. This is accomplished by focusing attention and building functional workgroups on issues that would often benefit the frontlines. More importantly, it is using field level CPOs and Law Enforcement Staff with their knowledge, creativity, and innovation to make improvements within the entire division.

All employees of the DGIF Law Enforcement Division are given the opportunity to submit constructive suggestions to the O.P.S. Advisory Council. This council will facilitate employee feedback in one of two ways. If it is an O.P.S. Project that is currently underway in the council's completion tracker database, the employee should reach out directly to either the designated project leader or one of its team members with feedback and/or suggestions. If the suggestion is already listed as a "Potential" E.S.P. Project or if the employee believes it should be added to that list, the employee may complete an "Employee Suggestion Form" and submit it directly to the O.P.S. Advisory Council at this dedicated mailbox [OPS@dgif.virginia.gov](mailto:OPS@dgif.virginia.gov). This council will review employee suggestions on a quarterly basis.

When the interest of senior leadership and the necessary resources both exist to move a proposed project from a potential to active status, those that made the suggestion will be contacted and a team will be created to work on the new project towards an implementation target date set by the O.P.S. Advisory Council.

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#### **From inception to 12/31/2019:**

- **30** Projects and work teams created, which has led to the completion of **24** projects, using group creativity and innovation to build upon those employee initiatives
- **108** LE Officers / Staff Members have participated as Team Members in this Employee Suggestion Program, with **18** of them taking on the responsibility as a Project Leader
- **Total of 8** Completed Project Titles **in 2019** included: GW/CPO Retiree Appreciation Program / Newsletter; Officer-Involved Incident (OIS) Training / SOP; Boating Accident Investigation Standards / Training / SOP; Performance Evaluation Criteria (Work Plans); Professionalism Decree (Formal Recognition Award); Kill Permit / DCAP Issuance / Reporting Standardization / SOP; Lifesaving Medals Standardized Process / Award Review Panel; and the VCP Recognition and Engagement Handbook

### **Peer Support Program**

The Division's Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team has been rebranded and rejuvenated into a comprehensive Peer Support Team. To provide for division employees' mental health wellness, the "End-Game" for the Peer Support Team is to provide a confidential support system to foster resilience by taking care of our most valuable resource, our fellow officers. The Peer Support Team encompasses a two-part approach to mental health wellness. Part one is a CISM response and part two is peer-to-peer support.

The division employees, along with their families and other associates may experience psychological discomfort and problems as a result of their involvement in major disasters, shootings, or other emergency events. Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is intended to assist employees in coping with both personal and job-related effects they have experienced. The emphasis throughout

the program is to prevent, educate, recognize and release stress before it affects the health, safety, personal lives and job performance of those who perform law enforcement and other emergency services.

The peer-to-peer portion of the team is one-on-one support from trained peers for officers facing personal challenges, as well as ongoing support following critical incidents. The goal of maximizing personal, professional and family life is in the forefront of these peer contacts.

The Peer Support Team is comprised of Conservation Police Officers, Conservation Police Communication Officers and a Mental Health Clinician. The team members must complete the state approved training for Critical Incident Stress Management and a peer-to-peer module.

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In 2019, specialized training was completed and five new members were added to the team. Additionally, three officers joined the team and are awaiting the next training session in 2020.

The certified team currently consists of the following members:

- Region I: Sarah Druy and Cameron Dobyns
- Region III: Lee Wensel and Eric Rorabaugh
- Region IV: Tim Bostic and Derrick Kekic
- HQ: Rob Ham, Mike Hill and Kevin Leonard
- Mental Health Clinician: Dawn Linton, LCSW/Chaplin

To make contact with a peer team member, you may contact any team member directly or contact Rob Ham for assistance or referrals.

### **Officer and Law Enforcement Staff Recognition**

In 2019, we took a long and hard look at employee recognition within the Law Enforcement Division and the Office of Professional Standards (O.P.S.) Advisory Council took on the project to standardize, develop and implement our awards and honors program. It began with extensive research of what other well-respected law enforcement agencies had in place and then fine-tuning those best practices for our use. The largest change was that we adopted either peer nomination and/or peer selection processes into each of our recognition efforts. In addition, we added Commendation Bars to our uniforms to identify who had received awards to include the Valor, Meritorious Service, and Lifesaving Medals, as well as having been selected as a Game Warden / CPO of the Year. After much work and feedback, we wrote a VCP Recognition and Engagement Handbook that is more than 60 pages and growing and covers each of the processes for all of our awards and honors in detail.

Starting in 2019, we now hold an Annual VCP Awards Ceremony (pictures from our inaugural event):



**Sitting Left to Right: Executive Director Brown, Board Chair Parker, Maj. Young and Maj. Naff with the O. P. S. Advisory Council Members standing in the background**



**Our First Class (2019) of O.P.S. Professionalism Decree Inductees are from left to right: Karen Austin, Denise Harrison, Sergeant Richard Goszka, Carol Lee Bell and Robert Schmidt**

## Accreditation Self-Assessment Phase

### *A Continuous Pursuit of Excellence*

The Law Enforcement Division of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries was the first Wildlife agency to be accredited with The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) in the early 1990s. However, we did not continue that pursuit of accreditation after our initial assessment. Fast-forward to May of 2018 the Law Division set off on its endeavor to once again be an accredited Law Enforcement Division. With this endeavor, we have set our sights on seeking accreditation with the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC). VLEPSC consists of an Executive Board appointed by the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police and the Virginia Sheriff's Association. Personnel from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services provide support services to the Board and serve as the coordinating agency for Commission activities. The Board which consists of all active chiefs or sheriffs, are tasked by their respective associations with developing and maintaining a formal accreditation process specific to Virginia law enforcement agencies, including the development of a comprehensive set of professional standards. The VLEPSC program constitutes the first joint effort of this type in the history of the Commonwealth.

The decision to seek accreditation with VLEPSC was based on the ability for networking and coordination with localities throughout the Commonwealth as well as a cost savings analysis. There are currently 99 Virginia agencies accredited with VLEPSC compared to only 33 agencies with CALEA. The initial cost of VLEPSC is only \$250 compared to \$11,450. Both accreditation programs offer a proven ongoing process whereby agencies evaluate their policy and procedures putting best law enforcement practices in motion.



In September of 2019, Executive Director Brown approved the hiring of an Accreditation Manager, to set up the accreditation initiative for success. Lt. Rob Ham was promoted as the Accreditation Manager. Lt. Ham's job is not just to achieve accreditation but to maintain accreditation in the future and consistently review the Division's written directives to ensure that the Division is employing the best law enforcement practices. Lt. Ham is being assisted by Senior Officer Rich Landers and Retired Captain Bobby Mawyer who both bring a wealth of knowledge and talent to the team. Bobby is a current Master Assessor for VLEPSC and is instrumental in the guidance of the process. The Accreditation Team is currently working in the self-assessment phase of the accreditation process. The Division is intending to receive VLEPSC Accreditation in the fall of 2021. The accreditation team is inspired by this quote which is also found in the VLEPSC Program Manual "Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives." — Will A. Foster

The Division and the Agency are committed to this continued pursuit of excellence through the VLEPSC accreditation process. In 2020, we will update our Law Enforcement Policies into General Orders providing clear, concise, and up-to-date written directives for division employees that will be easily accessible through online document management software.

### 3.1 Recruitment

The 11th Basic Training Academy is tentatively scheduled to begin in April of 2021. The division will begin actively recruiting candidates for this class in early 2020. In the meantime, the recruiting team is keeping engaged with communities across Virginia. Sergeant Mike Hill and other officers have been participating in numerous career days, community events, and collegiate criminal justice programs. The division receives nearly 200 inquiries a week from individuals who are interested in pursuing a career in natural resource law enforcement. An informational card along with a recruiting flyer was developed to quickly provide answers to the most common questions the recruiters receive. The division also collects email addresses from potential candidates and sends out updates for future employment opportunities.

**Are You Interested In Serving Your Community Through A Rewarding Career In Natural Resources Law Enforcement?**



Conservation Police Officers have been serving Virginia's communities since 1903

**Benefits:**

- Beginning starting salary of \$41,814
- VALORS Retirement Program
- Full state health benefits
- All uniforms and equipment provided





**Other Incentives:**

- Flexible work hours and shifts
- Take home vehicle program
- Opportunities for professional development throughout career



Contact a Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries  
Recruiter at **804.367.DGIF** or **recruiter@dgif.virginia.gov**



### 3.2 Training

Training is one of the most constant and consistent job responsibilities that the division performs. In 2019 the training unit provided a defensive tactics refresher training involving ASP and OC courses. The division also provided instruction on groundfighting techniques and familiarization with the new patrol rifle sling. Firearms training was conducted three times in 2019. Throughout these three trainings, instructors provided annual firearms qualifications, low light familiarization training, and other basic skill building exercises.



In 2019 officers received recertification training in CPR and First Aid. This training included information on tourniquets, snake bites, and the treatment of various wounds that cannot be treated with a tourniquet. Supervisors and managers attended their biennial in-service training in 2019 where they received focused updates regarding Zuercher Suite and agency FOIA issues.

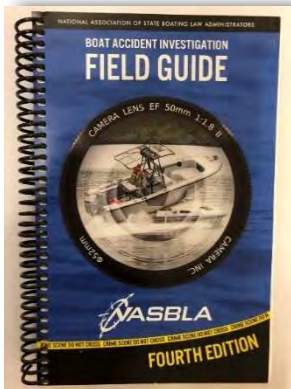
For the first time, 124 non-law division employees were provided driver training by The Law Division Driver Training Cadre. The courses consisted of parallel parking, backing serpentine, trailer tracking and a blind spot demo. Classroom information was provided on what constitutes a reportable accident and accident reporting. This training was conducted at Kings Dominion on May 22, 2019 and The Berglund Center, Roanoke, on September 11-12, 2019.



As Virginia's primary marine law enforcement agency, DGIF has an active training program to address the needs of our officers as well as those of our partner agencies. DGIF is a National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Accredited agency. Through this accreditation, our credentialed instructors are able to present training in several areas of boat operation and investigation. In June, The Port of Virginia and DGIF presented two sessions of the NASBLA

Tactical Operator's Course to our partner law enforcement agencies in the Hampton Roads Area. These courses are 5 days in length and follow the Federal Exclusionary Zone Enforcement Training Curriculum. They are designed to enhance the country's port security capabilities by providing

students with the knowledge and skills necessary to appropriately react to threats in the maritime community. DGIF and NASBLA instructors taught law enforcement officers the same tactics, techniques and procedures that the U.S. Coast Guard uses to train its boat operators, ensuring seamless integration into security operations amongst federal, state, county, and local maritime law enforcement officers and agencies.



DGIF partnered with NASBLA to deliver the Boating Accident Investigation and Analysis Level I Comprehensive Course the week of March 11-15, 2019. DGIF and NASBLA instructors delivered this course to marine patrol officers from around Virginia and as far away as Guam. This course gives law enforcement officers the opportunity to develop and perfect their skills in order to conduct a thorough and comprehensive recreational boating accident investigation. The course is delivered in a blended format, with a 4-hour online portion required to be completed prior to the class convening date. The instructor-led classroom portion contains 36 hours of instruction covering the areas of investigation procedures, collision dynamics, and damage assessment.

## 4.0 Law Support Services

### 4.1 Communications Center



DGIF operates a 24 hour, 7 days a week Communications Center that provides support throughout the entire Commonwealth, not only for Conservation Police Officers and State Park Rangers, but all agency personnel as well. In 2019, the Law Division promoted two Communications Officers to Communication Supervisors. The center also employed 8 full time and 3 part time Communications Officers. The addition of these supervisor positions has allowed the Communications Manager to put more focus on directing the Communications Center toward long-term goals. One project that began to take shape in 2019 is the construction of a 150' radio monopole at DGIF Headquarters. When completed, this "microwave tower" will replace the underground lines that currently support the Communication Center's STARS radio system. Additionally, the backup antennas for the system will also be located on the monopole. Once completed, the Communications Center's radio operations should be better

protected from accidental line breaks. Biannually, the Center prepares Crimeline Reports for the Virginia Sportsmen Reward Committee for their review and potential reward for callers whose information resulted in a positive impact on the final disposition of the case. Officer patrols in the

Commonwealth have continued to increase each year, especially with the addition of a few call types to capture data that may have been classified differently in the past. Other significant increases include wildlife nuisance calls and DGIF service-related calls. Welcomed reductions were observed in DGIF Violation type calls, as well as waterway incident type calls. Overall, Calls for Service during 2019 were up 21%. November 2019 was a record-breaking month for the Center. First, November saw the largest number of Call for Service ever created for a single month, **6,832**! That is an increase of over 500 calls from the previous November. Additionally, the opening day of the firearms deer season also saw a record breaking 499 Calls for Service created in a single day. That averaged out to be 100 calls per dispatcher or one call made every 3 minutes. With the increase in calls in general, these numbers will undoubtedly continue to climb in 2020.



**Table 2: Dispatch Summary from 2015 to 2019**

DESCRIPTION	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Total CAD Calls for Service</b>	37,785	37,991	44,063	48,442	58,734
<b>Crimeline Reports</b>	3,666	4,058	4,136	2,170	5,090
<b>Environmental Issues/Fish Kills</b>	41	67	69	205	206
<b>Wildlife Nuisance/Permits/Injured related calls</b>	5712	6,979	6,566	5,932	6,748
<b>CPO/Ranger Patrols</b>	18,189	17,255	20,968	21,106	25,133
<b>Hunt/Boat/Fish/Trapping Violation Type Calls</b>	7,440	6,883	7,084	6,414	5,226
<b>General / Traffic Violations</b>	759	708	916	1,594	1,828
<b>DGIF Service-Related Type Calls</b>	4,799	4,989	3,178	2,757	3,994
<b>Hunt Incident Reports</b>	21	21	17	31	34
<b>Boat Accident/Sinking/Drowning Reports</b>	123	135	126	100	98
<b>Distress/Overdue Hunters, Fishermen or Boaters</b>	79	96	98	149	223
<b>Accidents Involving DGIF Persons/Equipment</b>	12	11	17	22	27
<b>Criminal Investigations/Complaints</b>	535	577	419	620	358
<b>Stolen Property Reports/Investigations (Boat, other, etc.)</b>	111	119	130	101	109
<b>Abandoned or Recovered Boats</b>	148	151	149	220	177

## 4.2 Records Program

In 2019, the Conservation Police had their first complete year utilizing Central Square Technologies' Zuercher Suite (Zuercher) records management system as its sole resource for tracking crime data. This product functions on case-centric reporting. Zuercher affords the division a sophisticated tool encompassing a vast array of functions and database groups: CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch); case management, Master Name database; and GEO validation capabilities.



The Law Records Program is responsible for the Records Management System (RMS) aspects of managing the case-based data. A fundamental focus of Law Records is to support system development and maintenance while striving to ensure data accuracy and acting as a primary source for data edits. As mandated by the state of Virginia, we submit our records containing offenses to the FBI through the Virginia State Police using a National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Based on these criminal records, the division makes continual contributions to the Naval Criminal Investigative Service's (NCIS) Law Enforcement Information Exchange (LINX) system.

**Table 3: Records Management System (RMS) Summary from 2015-2019**

<b>RMS Summary</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>All Case Types*</b>					<b>10933</b>
<b>Investigative Cases</b>	<b>8002</b>	<b>6228</b>	<b>6902</b>	<b>5419</b>	<b>8412</b>
<b>Arrests</b>	<b>9876</b>	<b>8058</b>	<b>8656</b>	<b>6814</b>	<b>6676</b>

\*In 2019 there were 8 unique case types used in Zuercher.



In 2019, Law Records developed and initiated processes within Zuercher establishing specialized case types used to support other agency divisions in their data collection and program management. Each case type has a unique case indicator, permission rights, data collection forms, and workflows customized for specified user groups. Development included a centralized method for groups to

request specific services of our officers in the field. Via this incorporated tool, user groups are able to uniformly work in tangent with our Dispatch center to issue and manage requests for officer services. Within these dedicated cases, group users create a case for each request having the ability to communicate directly with our officers. The system offers the group a window in which they can follow the progress of each request. This aspect alone creates a higher level of efficiency in virtually eliminating additional support by our Dispatch center and other communicative actions required to determine



<b>Case Types (non-offense) *</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Animal Rehabilitation</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Boat Section</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Foxhound Training Preserve</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Licensed Shooting Preserve</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Shoot from Vehicle Permit</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Wildlife Kill Permit/DCAP</b>	<b>2164</b>
<b>Total Records</b>	<b>2282</b>

\*All case types originated in 2019

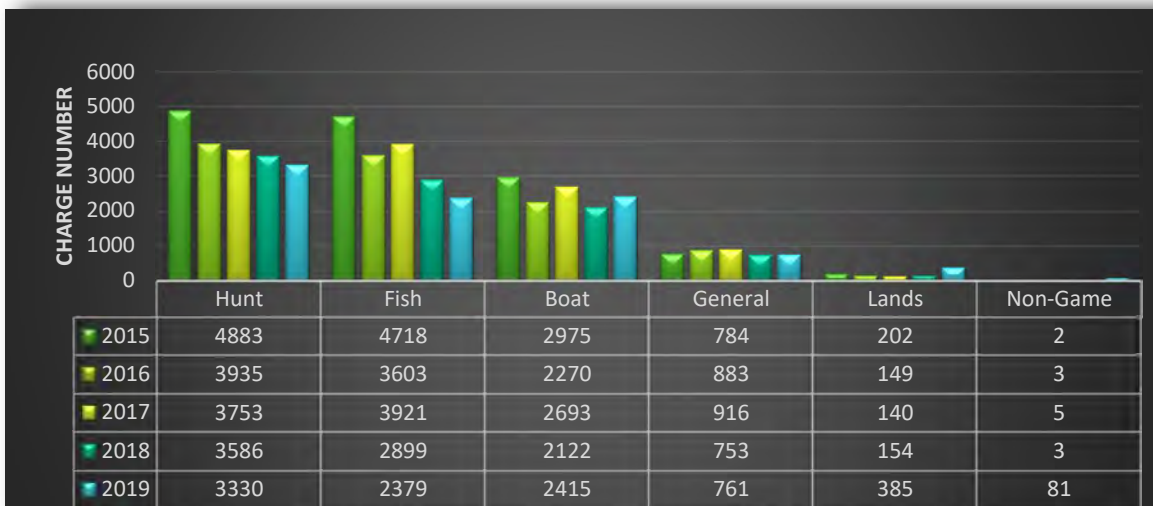
request status. Agency functions involved in this customized portion of our program are inspections for Boat HIN/Dealer (soft rollout December 2019), Wildlife Rehabilitation, Foxhound Training Preserves, Licensed Shooting Preserves, Shoot from the Vehicle Permits and Wildlife Kill Permits/DCAP. The largest and most complex functions involve

wildlife's program for Wildlife Kill Permits/DCAP. Multiple fragmented elements of the Wildlife Kill Permits/DCAP program were incorporated into a single comprehensive management tool. Wildlife personnel, Dispatch, officers, Complementary Workforce volunteers, and even constituents have

been empowered by the ability to access the process on varying levels. The extensive and complex information submitted by all of our Zuercher users is essential to documenting and supporting the agency's mission to the state's wildlife and constituents. Zuercher has vast potential to envelope additional agency processes.

Summarizing arrest charges within a case gives a view of the hunting, boating and fishing criminal activity that occurs across the Commonwealth. The graphic below breaks down the arrest charges into the following major categories for the past five years: Hunt, Fish, Boat, General, DGIF Property, and Non-Game.

**Figure 1: Arrest Charge Count by Major Category from 2015-2019**



Statutes within the database can be queried by subcategories based on relatedness such as trespassing, license, season, safety, etc. The charge data shown below is reflective of these minor categories.

**Table 4: RMS Arrest Charge Breakdown by Minor Category from 2015-2019**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
License - Fish	3877	2892	3102	2359	1810
Safety - Boat	1867	1436	1791	1474	1619
Season - Hunt	1685	1491	1516	1397	1257
License - Hunt	1782	1402	1297	1274	983
Trespass	987	883	717	531	614
License - Boat	856	686	745	477	579
Traffic	186	252	299	391	414
Safety - Other	301	213	182	306	379
Season - Fish	293	277	362	254	288
Drugs - Marijuana	225	159	228	204	155
Littering	312	220	193	191	153
Firearm	426	374	364	159	142

Other	141	112	101	113	130
Alcohol - Other	190	99	146	106	94
Fraud	67	36	75	67	73
Drugs - Other	44	41	68	51	61
Alcohol - BUI	58	32	42	44	53
Alcohol - DUI	33	42	25	44	42
Damage	49	32	20	33	33
Elude/Impede	24	26	22	22	25
Larceny	19	26	28	14	14
Alcohol - HUI	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	12
Assault	9	2	4	2	6
Grand Total	13564	10843	11428	9517	8936

The top ten violations resulting in a summons issued in 2019 are listed below. The top two violations have consistently held their rank since 2015. This year hunting over bait has moved up 2 levels from its 2018 ranking and a second “boating” code has been elevated to the list.

**Table 5: Top 10 Arrest Charges Issued in 2019 by Conservation Police.**

RANK	CODE DESCRIPTION	CODE	2019
1	LICENSE: FISH W/O FRESHWATER LICENSE	29.1-335(FRESH)	1579
2	WATERCRAFT: PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES REQUIRED	4VAC15-430-30	803
3	TRESPASS: TRESPASS BY HUNTERS AND FISHERS	18.2-132	359
4	TO HUNT OVER A BAITED AREA	29.1-521(4)	335
5	LICENSE: HUNT W/O LICENSE	29.1-335(HUNT)	258
6	LICENSE: HUNT W/O DEER/TURKEY LICENSE	29.1-335(DEER/TURKEY)	230
7	LICENSE: FISH W/O STOCKED TROUT LICENSE	29.1-335(TROUT)	213
8	VESSEL SAFETY EQUIPMENT VIOLATION	29.1-735	188
9	DEPT OWNED, CONTROLLED, MANAGED LAND VIOLATION	4VAC15-40-280	187
10	GAME/FISH: TAKE OR ATTEMPT TO TAKE DURING CLOSED SEASON	29.1-550(i)	186



As a Virginia Law Enforcement Agency, DGIF participates in the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) program with the FBI. The state repository for this data is through Virginia State Police's (VSP) Incident Based Reporting Program (IBR). Each month DGIF submits crime data from RMS using the IBR format required by VSP. VSP utilizes this collected data to publish the Crime in



Virginia report every year based on Uniform Crime Report (UCR) codes. The table below lists DGIF's data from a UCR perspective similar to the Crime in Virginia Report. Based on the NIBRS system, most of what Conservation Police Officers enforce falls under the UCR code 90Z, "All Other Offenses" (7,567 offenses in 2019). Due to the ambiguity of the 90Z designation which can include anything from illegal possession of wildlife to not having a fire extinguisher on a vessel, the Law Division created the major and minor categories, reflected previously, to help focus on DGIF's mission and goals.

**Table 6: DGIF Arrest Charge Summary by UCR Code from 2015-2019**

GROUP	CODE	UCR DESCRIPTION	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
A	09B	MANSLAUGHTER BY NEGLIGENCE		1			
A	13A	AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	4	1	1	2	3
A	13B	SIMPLE ASSAULT	9	2	2	1	2
A	13C	INTIMIDATION	4	4	2	2	1
A	210	EXTORTION/BLACKMAIL			1		
A	220	BURGLARY/BREAKING AND ENTERING		3	1		
A	23C	SHOPLIFTING		1		1	
A	23H	ALL OTHER LARCENY	16	22	25	12	33
A	240	MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT	2		3	1	1
A	250	FORGERY/COUNTERFEITING	5	5	14	15	17
A	26A	FALSE PRETENSE/SWINDLE/CONFIDENCE GAME	56	28	65	39	44
A	26B	CREDIT CARD FRAUD				1	
A	26C	IMPERSONATION	7	9	8	12	9
A	270	EMBEZZLEMENT				1	
A	280	STOLEN PROPERTY OFFENSES (RECEIVING, ETC.)	1	2			8
A	290	DESTRUCTIVE/DAMAGE/VANDALISM OF PROPERTY	49	32	21	36	25
A	35A	DRUG/NARCOTIC VIOLATIONS	266	192	289	250	206
A	35B	DRUG EQUIPMENT VIOLATIONS	3	8	7	5	8
A	40A	PROSTITUTION					
A	40B	ASSISTING/PROMOTING PROSTITUTION					
A	520	WEAPON LAW VIOLATIONS	382	315	313	324	420
B	90B	CURFEW/LOITERING/VAGRANCY VIOLATIONS	4		7	1	
B	90C	DISORDERLY CONDUCT	1			1	

GROUP	CODE	UCR DESCRIPTION	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
B	90D	DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE	78	66	63	74	82
B	90E	DRUNKENNESS	15	6	13	11	11
B	90F	FAMILY OFFENSES , NONVIOLENT		1	5	1	1
B	90G	LIQUOR LAW VIOLATIONS	175	93	133	95	116
B	90J	TRESPASS OF REAL PROPERTY	980	878	709	524	575
B	90X	CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT FELONY					
B	90Z	ALL OTHER OFFENSES	10842	8578	9051	7558	7567
B	NR	NON-REPORTABLE OFFENSES - PER DCJS/VSP	665	596	695	550	

#### 4.2.1 Wildlife and Boat Revocations

Law Records is responsible for submitting wildlife revocations to the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact (IWVC), which is also state mandated. On December 1, 2011, the Board of IWVC administrators accepted DGIF's application to become a member. DGIF has been contributing Virginia wildlife revocations into the IWVC database since 2014. Law Records staff regularly download IWVC data containing revocations associated with wildlife violations submitted by the 48 U.S. member states.

Boating revocations records are also the responsibility of Law Records. This type of revocation is managed via a customized divisional dedicated IT process. As with the wildlife revocations, Zuercher is the starting point to document a revocation. Officers initially update the associated case with relevant revocation information. Auto generated notifications are issued to Law Records personnel to continue processing the revocation data.

Ultimately, an "alert" associated with each revocation is created within Zeurcher. The alerts display a visual indicator, automatically deactivated on the expiration date of the restriction. This information can be instrumental in a CPO's first contact with an offender/suspect and potentially used to support charge presentations in the judicial system.



**Table 7: Revocations Entered into the Revocations Database from 2015 to 2019**

Revocations Entered	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
VA Hunt	110	113	94	93	94
VA Fish	7	1	4	2	5
VA Boat	22	12	22	9	13
Total VA Revocations	139	126	120	104	112
Other State Revocations Ratified	4724	5287	5150	7246	5591
<b>TOTAL REVOCATIONS</b>	<b>4863</b>	<b>5413</b>	<b>5270</b>	<b>7350</b>	<b>5703</b>

### 4.2.2 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

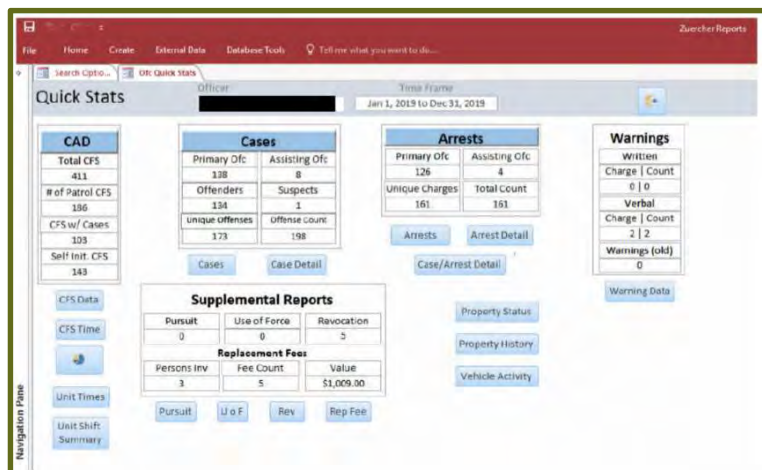
In 2019, Law Records was responsible for receipt and response of 132 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)/subpoena requests involving our crime reports. These requests can range from seeking background information for potential law enforcement hires, data requests targeted to specific interests, arrest reports, or case reports containing a vast array of elements. Requests typically originate from the public, attorneys, other law enforcement entities, insurance companies, Commonwealth Attorneys, Medical Examiner office, and internal agency personnel. From 2013 through 2018, Law Records maintained a simplified log to track FOIA requests received and responded to by its section. At the implementation of Zuercher, we were able to incorporate a more formal and sophisticated tool to manage FOIA requests. Prior to this implementation, the division as a whole was not tracking their requests for data compilations, which is rather extensive. Yearly totals for this type of request could potentially double any numbers represented in the Law Records' tally. In 2019, we continued refining the process for documenting FOIA requests utilizing Zuercher. Our intent is that 2020 FOIA records will reflect a more inclusive representation of efforts dedicated to their management.



### 4.2.3 Information Technology (IT)



Our RMS system is a repository for an extensive amount of information. The largest amount of information is captured by cases created by our officers. The data within this system is somewhat segmented and compartmentalized. Although it contains primary filtering tools and custom reports module, it does not offer a retrieval method to centralize information. The RMS system provides dozens of various reports, but each is a unique report with limited flexibility for the end user. In 2019, our IT Senior Programmer developed and implemented a sophisticated independent query tool, aptly named Zuercher Statistics (ZSTAT), which mirrors the data within the RMS system. By leveraging a daily export of data, ZSTAT can provide over 30 different reports based on officer/district and date range. This allows an officer to audit their statistics and contributions to the foundation database to ensure its accuracy. Supervisors and Command Staff can easily perform evaluations and compare activity uniformly across the state. Our staff demonstrated this software during the 2019 Zuercher (Z1) national vendor user conference in South Dakota. The presentation emphasized the power of their reporting module leveraged with external processing (ZSTAT) to enhance the speed and ease of manipulating large amounts of data.



### 4.3 Fleet and Asset Management

Our fleet and asset team had a very busy 2019. The following list describes some of the highlights:

➤ VEHICLE HIGHLIGHTS:

- Avg vehicle age of fleet: **2013 Model Year**
- Vehicles in LE fleet: **210**
- Avg mileage on fleet: **98,000**
- Total miles on fleet: **21,700,000**
- Total miles driven in 2019: **3,570,000**
- Avg miles driven in 2019: **16,000**
- Most miles driven: **37,000**

- Coordinated with Virginia State Police (VSP) in the decommissioning of surplus vehicles and initiated internal decommissioning of selected vehicles.

- Initiated internal maintenance of parts salvage to replace broken parts on law enforcement fleet vehicles with parts from surplus vehicles to provide cost reduction for the department.



- Increased participation in User Agency Requirements Committee (UARC) meetings to strengthen knowledge of VSP functions.

- Completed verification of DGIF law enforcement vehicle assets and reconciliation with VSP Sunflower Asset System. This required purchase and development of equipment, files and protocol for in-field inspection of all LE STARS related assets.

- Completed verification of VSP Network Operations Center (NOC) alias records with DGIF active aliases to correct VSP records. Completed verification of VSP Network Operations Center (NOC) alias records with DGIF active aliases to correct VSP records.

- Completed VSP Phase 4 DVRS replacement and ensured that all LE vehicles were upgraded on time.

- Initiated preparation support for accounting asset personnel on vehicles for surplus to facilitate the process.

- Coordinated the purchase of 13 new vehicles for LE.

- Composed justification letters for new vehicle purchases and sole source vendor approvals.



- Researched, purchased and coordinated the installation of LE equipment in several new boats.

- Researched, purchased and coordinated the installation of LE equipment for new vehicles to include the following:
  - Coordinated shift of installation workload from VSP shop to local vendor.
  - Dodge Durango Equipment Changes: specialty vault, and new lights/layout/controls



- Worked with Vehicle Team to determine needs and options for LE vehicle equipment and decals.
- Coordinated vendor demonstrations of law enforcement equipment for vehicle team evaluation.
- Coordinated the decaling and specialty equipment vehicle installations for new K9 Officers.
- Coordinated LE vehicles and boats for public events such as the State Fair.
- Developed MOU spreadsheet for locality inclusive radio channels to be upgraded into field radios.
- Responded to daily requests from field officers for equipment issues, spare parts and coordinated repairs with local vendors.
- Coordinated manufacture and installation of Breast Cancer Awareness “Pink” decals for vehicles.



## 5.0 Specialty Teams

### 5.1 K9 Team

The primary purpose of the Canine (K9) Program is to further the mission of the agency by providing a specifically trained scent discrimination canine team to assist law enforcement personnel in tracking violators, detecting concealed wildlife and firearms, and conducting area searches for evidence recovery. Additionally, high visibility patrols will act to deter potential violations. A secondary purpose of the K9 Program is education and deterrence through K9 demonstrations and presentations for schools, interested groups, and the media. By providing resource management information during K9 demonstrations and presentations, a sense of wildlife resource stewardship is developed, and the agency has a renewed recognition for the great work it does. K9 units will also assist other enforcement agencies by tracking, recovering evidence at crime scenes, and locating missing or lost persons when requested and when available.



2019 was another busy year for the DGIF K9 Unit. CPO Glenn Cramer and K9 Waylon, and CPO Mark VanDyke attended the Indiana Conservation K9 Academy from January until May. Another review of the program was done and 4 new handlers were selected for the team. CPO Tyler Blanks and K9 Bruno, CPO Bonnie Braziel and K9 Grace, CPO Mark DiLuigi and K9 Lily, and CPO Ian Ostlund and K9 Reese will be attending our own K9 Academy beginning in February 2020. Also attending the academy will be Officer Wes Billings and his new K9 partner Molly. Officer Billings' original K9 partner Josie will be retiring in May 2020.

A sad ending to the year happened when CPO Wayne Billhimer's K9 partner Justice had a tumor rupture and required lifesaving surgery. The news only got worse when we received a confirmation that the tumor was a fast-growing cancer. This put an early end to Justice's work career and he has retired and will begin Chemo treatments.

The following table contains summary information for the K9 unit since 2014 and includes a snapshot of what Officer Billhimer and K9 Justice, Officer Wes Billings and K9 Josie, Officer Glenn Cramer and K9 Waylon, Officer Richard Howald and K9 Sky, and Officer Jim Patrillo and K9 Bailey did during the calendar year 2019:

**Table 8: Summary for K-9 Activity from 2015 to 2019 (\*separation of uses and patrols starting 2018)**

DESCRIPTION	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>TOTAL USES</b>	154	76	127	267	286
<b>TOTAL PATROLS</b>	*	*	*	182	195
<b>PUBLIC APPEARANCE</b>	42	33	60	85	89
<b>TRACKS</b>	78	64	52	63	71
<b>WILDLIFE DETECTION</b>	29	26	21	28	18
<b>AREA SEARCH</b>	87	51	42	51	63
<b>NONSPECIFIC USE</b>	21	16	35	40	45



## 5.2 Boat Fraud and Theft Investigations



In 2017, the Law Division recognized an increasing need in the enforcement of boat fraud and theft laws. Special Agent Jim Croft, as part of the Special Operations Unit, had historically been tasked with investigating stolen boats. The cases he was becoming involved in and the information he was receiving, indicated that he was going to need assistance to be able to effectively address these issues across the state. The decision was made to assign two officers each year to work with him for a period of one year. This would not only give him needed assistance, but provide a set of new skills and investigatory knowledge to the assisting

officers so they could continue to identify and investigate boat fraud and theft cases in their respective areas after the completion of their assignment. Through 2019, five officers have participated, been involved in significant cases, and taken the law division's response to these types of crimes to a new level.

One interesting case investigated by the boat theft unit involved a large Venture center console boat with twin 300 HP Yamaha engines that had been stolen from a business in Wilmington N.C. An individual fraudulently attempted to obtain an abandoned boat title for this vessel in Virginia Beach, VA. The titling section at DGIF had asked Conservation Police Officer Mark Machen to do a routine inspection of the vessel for a HIN as it was not on the paperwork the applicant had submitted. It became apparent that the applicant for the boat title did not expect that an officer would come out to inspect this vessel.



The demeanor of the applicant was extremely nervous. He directed the officer to a nearby residence where the boat was stored. Another individual there at the residence where the boat was stored made statements that seemed unusual and the officer was alert enough to become suspicious about the circumstances of the vessel being there. He inspected the boat. However, all the serial numbers on the vessel and engines appeared legitimate and after obtaining the Hull Identification Number the officer left.

Officer Machen then called Special Agent Jim Croft and discussed this boat with him. Agent Croft directed Officer Machen to return to the residence to watch the boat while he was responding as he felt the boat was stolen and was afraid it might disappear by the time he could arrive.

Returning to the location just in time, Officer Machen observed the second suspect preparing to tow the boat off. Seeing the officer watching him, he instead took off in a vehicle, leaving without the vessel. Boat theft investigators then arrived and the vessel was seized. The HIN, confidential HIN and engine serial numbers were expertly altered. It was quickly determined that this boat was the one stolen from Wilmington. The boat was valued at \$200,000.

What made this case significant was that the owner of the shop where the boat was stolen from had seen a surveillance video of the boat being towed away from his business by a Chevrolet truck. Later that week he saw a Chevrolet truck that was similar in appearance parked near a saw mill that was closed down. Taking a gun with him, he went to investigate and found two individuals stealing scrap metal from the business. Believing they were involved in the larceny of his customer's boat, he confronted them at gunpoint, eventually fatally shooting one man.



The subsequent investigation revealed the scrap metal thieves had no involvement in the larceny of the vessel and this was an unfortunate and tragic incident. This was a high-profile case in Wilmington and the recovery of the stolen vessel in Virginia was a break in the case.

As a result of this investigation the boat theft and fraud unit determined the suspects were involved in cloning stolen vessels and perjuring state documents in an attempt to obtain a title for this boat. During this investigation, boat theft Agents Paul Inge and Jason Harris executed numerous search warrants for electrical devices and have developed significant evidence against individuals involved. This case exemplifies how officers in the field are instrumental in solving these crimes and protecting and recovering our constituents' property.

During 2019, SA Croft and Agent Jason Harris were able to present to the DGIF Board the number of cases of title fraud that the unit had investigated and the amount of money that the agency had not been paid due to the fraudulent acts. This demonstration brought attention to the Board of the need to increase these types of investigations. This unit continues to be very successful and the following is a snapshot of what has been accomplished by this team:



DESCRIPTION	2018	2019
<b>CASES DEVELOPED</b>	114	105
<b>FELONY CHARGES</b>	11	51
<b>MISDEMEANOR CHARGES</b>	55	24
<b>WARNINGS</b>	7	31
<b>SEARCH WARRANTS</b>	12	60
<b>RECOVERED BOATS</b>	11	21
<b>RECOVERED TRAILERS</b>	5	12
<b>CAMPER RECOVERED</b>	1	1
<b>IMPACT ON LOCAL TAXATION</b>	\$90,000	\$90,000
<b>TOTAL VALUE OF RECOVERED PROPERTY</b>	\$241,000	\$334,000

SA Croft was invited to attend and be a presenter for the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Northeast Fish and Wildlife Association Conference in Groton Connecticut. This event was attended by over 500 natural

resources professionals. SA Croft presented information to the group about his experiences and findings involving boat fraud and theft investigations. His presentation allowed others to take some of his investigative knowledge back to their localities to aid in their own cases.

### 5.3 Tracking Team

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) tracking program continues to be a popular course among local law enforcement agencies. In response to several requests, the tracking training cadre has taught over 35 different local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. The tracking instructors receive excellent evaluations from the classes.



As of 2019, DGIF tracking teams utilized the skills of 32 dedicated Officers who have taken on this extra responsibility in addition to their normal duties. Of these Officers, four take on yet another responsibility as the regional team leader. Each team leader coordinates regular team training sessions and supervises regional operations as they arise. Tracking team members regularly train and work with one of nine VDGIF K9 units.

The following incidents are examples of cases that Virginia Conservation Police Officers utilized visual tracking and tracking teams from 2019:

- Region 4 tracking team members were called to assist a VDGIF K9 unit with an incident in Shenandoah County. The incident took place as local law enforcement attempted to arrest a suspect when a crowd formed and became hostile. Local law enforcement requested assistance and a suspect was able to escape the scene on foot. The DGIF tracking team members provided security and located



prints of the suspect. The team ended the track when terrain conditions became too dangerous to navigate.

- A Conservation Officer responded to a complaint of road hunting and trespassing to hunt on private property. Once on scene the Officer was able to corroborate statements and located human tracks leading to remains of an illegally taken deer.



## 5.4 Honor Guard

The Honor Guard's primary function is to convey the respect and concern of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and to provide added dignity to the family of the deceased. It is the intent of the DGIF Law Enforcement Division to establish and maintain an Honor Guard to represent DGIF and the division, as a well-trained unit, to render honors, preserve traditions, promote esprit-de-corps, and instill pride



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Since its symbolic inception in May 2018, the Conservation Police Honor Guard has been utilized more than most would ever have imagined. Over the last year the unit has represented the agency at the Virginia CPO Awards Ceremony, dedication of the Robert W. Duncan Wildlife Management Area, Police Week Memorials, and funerals of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty from the mid-Atlantic to Minnesota. They have presented flags to various families in memoriam and appreciation of their loved one's service to the Commonwealth as prior Game Wardens and/or Conservation Police Officers. Through these events, the Honor Guard, in its short existence, has become a staple of the law enforcement division and a beacon of professionalism representing the agency.

Honor Guard members Boyette and Chittum had the honor of attending the funeral for Minnesota Conservation Officer Wynn. (See photo) There were a number of agencies in attendance including



members of approximately 13 other state agencies from as far away as Texas and California. Minnesota Chief of Law Enforcement Rodman Smith personally extended his appreciation to both officers and provided a MN patch and challenge coin. CPO Boyette commented, "It was a memorable experience to be able to honor Officer Wynn in person along with conservation officers from all over the country."

In order to ensure the unit is prepared for all assignments, they have instituted a rigorous training schedule and have taken their training very seriously. They have built solid relationships with supporters across the state, such as funeral home directors, that have given them very beneficial information, taught them common customs, and even participated in their training. These relationships continue to pay dividends with the donation of unique equipment such as a casket and casket truck, to keep training as realistic as possible. These items are accompanied by a myriad of specialized equipment such as flags, poles, stands, uniform attire, and other miscellaneous necessary equipment that have all proven vital to maintaining a high standard of service.



The most unique quality of the Honor Guard, are the members. Twelve team members dedicate their specialized skill set to promote esprit-de-corps and instill pride within the DGIF Law Enforcement Division. More importantly, the members are all volunteers equipped with strong morals and character operating with compassion, tact, and diplomacy. Through their dedication and professionalism DGIF will continue to preserve traditions and create anew.

## 6.0 Officer Outreach

Providing education and outreach is a vital component of the mission of the Law Enforcement Division. Conservation Police Officers plan, organize, and participate in a variety of outreach programs in an effort to gain voluntary compliance with and promote public understanding and support of the Commonwealth's wildlife, fish and boat laws and regulations.

CPOs teach students the importance of firearms safety, ethical hunting, and obeying wildlife laws at hunter education classes. In boater education courses, CPOs educate the public on topics such as boating safety equipment and safe boat operation practices.



Additionally, officers take part in community events throughout the Commonwealth including sportsman shows, state and county fairs, civic group events, career fairs, recruitment events, local festivals, and fireworks displays.

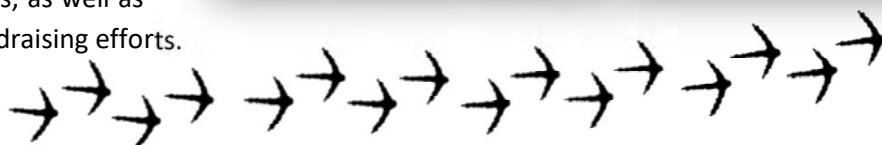
CPOs also recruit new hunters, anglers, and trappers by assisting in events aimed at introducing the public to these activities. In 2019, officers joined in hosting multiple youth hunts, military veteran hunts, and disabled veteran hunts. Youth and adult fishing events were held at lakes, streams, and ponds providing participants the opportunity to learn angling skills and, in many cases, catch their first fish. At trapping workshops, CPOs taught about equipment and techniques necessary to be a successful trapper. By being active in community outreach programs, CPOs serve a major role in connecting the public to the Commonwealth's natural resources.



## 7.0 Awards and Recognition

### 7.1 National Wild Turkey Federation Officer of the Year Award

The Virginia National Wild Turkey Federation State Chapter recognized Senior Officer Beth McGuire as Conservation Police Officer of the Year. She was recognized at the Virginia National Wild Turkey State Chapter's Leadership Banquet in Roanoke in January. She was then honored at the NWTF National Convention held in Nashville, TN in February 2020. Beth is well known throughout Highland County for her work with the Little Switzerland Strutters Chapter of the NWTF. She is intimately involved with the planning and coordination of JAKES events, youth and handicapped hunts, as well as recruiting and fundraising efforts.



## 7.2 Officer of the Year

K9 Officer Jim Patrillo has been named the 2019 Conservation Police Officer of the Year.

Each year, DGIF regions (I-IV), along with DGIF Special Operations, nominate outstanding officers who deserve extraordinary recognition and praise for their accomplishments. This year, the nominees were RI, Senior Officer Tyler Bumgarner, RII, Officer Brett Clawson, RIII, Officer Matthew Arnold, and RIV, Officer Tim Bostic.

Officer Patrillo, who works with the K9 Unit, received 13 commendations through the Office of Professional Standards. Just a few of Officer Patrillo's accomplishments are included in the list below.

- Initiated/responded to over 200 calls for service throughout the Commonwealth.
- Participated in over 70 educational and/or outreach events with K9 Bailey throughout the Commonwealth.
- A member of three instructional cadres for the DGIF Training Unit.
- Worked with varying corporations and vendors to obtain funds for the K9 program through grants, financial aid, and donations.
- Assisted numerous law enforcement agencies across the Commonwealth with K9 Bailey for lost/missing persons and criminal cases.
- Provided K9 assistance to our conservation officers that helped with investigations and evidence recovery.



The time, effort, and dedication to his K9 partner, Bailey, has created a strong bond and has led to Bailey's many successes. Jim's ability to foster and build relationships, while showing his passion and enthusiasm for the job, is the reason for his many commendations. The qualities shown make him a model conservation police officer and invaluable asset to the Commonwealth.

### 7.3 NASBLA Officer of the Year



Officer Brett Clawson has received The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Butch Potts Memorial Award. This award, also known as the 2019 Boating Officer of the Year award, is presented to one Officer in the Northern, Southern, and Western US regions.

Each year, DGIF regions (I-IV), along with Senior Leadership, nominate outstanding officers who deserve extraordinary recognition and praise for their accomplishments. This year, the nominees were RI, Senior Officer Tyler Bumgarner, RIII, Officer Jason Harris, RIV, Senior Officer Beth Garrett, and Special Agent Jim Croft. We congratulate all the Officers on their nominations.

Officer Clawson works in Franklin County, VA in DGIF Region II. His outstanding nomination highlighted his many efforts and achievements. Just a few of Officer Clawson's accomplishments are included in the list below.

- Detection efforts for identifying impaired boating operators.
- Eight BUI arrests and convictions.
- A recognition by Mothers against Drunk Driving (MADD) for extraordinary efforts.
- Extensive boat patrol efforts that lead to 135 boating related arrests.
- On scene investigator for 10 boating related accidents.

Brett's accomplishments were not all enforcement related. He openly participated in and directed seven boating safety outreach events. He developed relationships with boat livery vendors to ensure boating safety messages and education were being properly delivered to their customers renting boats. DGIF congratulates Officer Clawson on this well-deserved recognition of his outstanding commitment and dedication to the citizens of the Commonwealth, the Agency and Virginia's boating public.

## 7.4 Guy Bradley Award 2019

Conservation Police Officer Lt. Karl Martin was selected to receive the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) 2019 Guy Bradley Award. Karl joins Granville Ross (1988), Bruce Lemmert (2002), and John Hutchens (2013) as recipients from the Commonwealth of Virginia of this prestigious award. Receiving this award is the icing on the cake as he celebrates his retirement after 47 years (all in Franklin County, VA) of dedicated service to our natural resources, the agency, the sportsmen and sportswomen, and the citizens of the Commonwealth.



The Guy Bradley Award is presented annually to one state agency officer and one federal agency officer whose dedication and public service in protecting the nation's natural resources demonstrates outstanding leadership, excellence in implementation, knowledge, and actions that have advanced the cause of wildlife conservation. NFWF considers nominee's years of service, career achievements, professional contributions, impact on their community, innovation and other criteria in making their selection.

In 1905, Florida game warden Guy Bradley became the first wildlife law enforcement agent killed while performing his duties to protect the nation's wildlife. Law enforcement agents and officers like Bradley are essential to virtually every aspect of wildlife conservation, from recovering endangered species to managing waterfowl and big game resources. In honor of Guy Bradley, NFWF established this lifetime achievement award to recognize individuals for their commitment and performance in the field of wildlife law enforcement.

"This award, established in honor of the first wildlife law enforcement agent to be killed while performing his duties, recognizes extraordinary contributions to national and local efforts to protect wildlife," said Jeff Trandahl, executive director and CEO of NFWF. "Through his remarkable 47-year career, Lt. Karl Martin has demonstrated a deep commitment to protecting Virginia's natural resources and mentoring the next generation of wildlife law enforcement officers."



Lt. Martin's recognitions have included the National Wild Turkey Federation's Virginia Officer of the Year, numerous Mothers against Drunk Driving awards for drunk boating enforcement, and the Smith Mountain Lake Water Safety Council's yearly award they have renamed the "Karl Martin Water Safety Award." Karl was the first recipient. In 2011, he was honored with the Virginia Governor's Career Achievement Award. One of the highest honors presented to a state employee.

In 1982, he worked tirelessly to garner support for Senate Bill 169. This bill gave conservation police officers full police authority. In 1988, Lt. Martin worked with Virginia legislature to pass implied consent legislation for Virginia's waterways, which immediately had a positive impact on the safety of the boating public and Virginia's waterways. Karl

has mentored and supervised many officers that have gone on to higher positions including: Colonel, Majors, Lieutenants, Chief of the Virginia Capital Police, and the US Secret Service. He has also instructed over 15,000 students in Virginia's hunter education courses.

DGIF would like to say thank you to Lt. Martin for his career in law enforcement and protecting the citizens of the Commonwealth!

## 7.5 Years of Service 2019

At the end of 2019, the Law Enforcement Division had 186 full-time employees. Figure 4 shows a five-year incremental breakdown of how long these employees have been with DGIF. A total of 17 officers are over 50 years old and have over 25 years of service making them eligible for full retirement at any time. Table 10 lists the names of the Law Enforcement personnel that have reached years of service milestones in 2019.

Figure 2: Years of Service as of December 31, 2019, for Law Enforcement Personnel in Five Year Increments

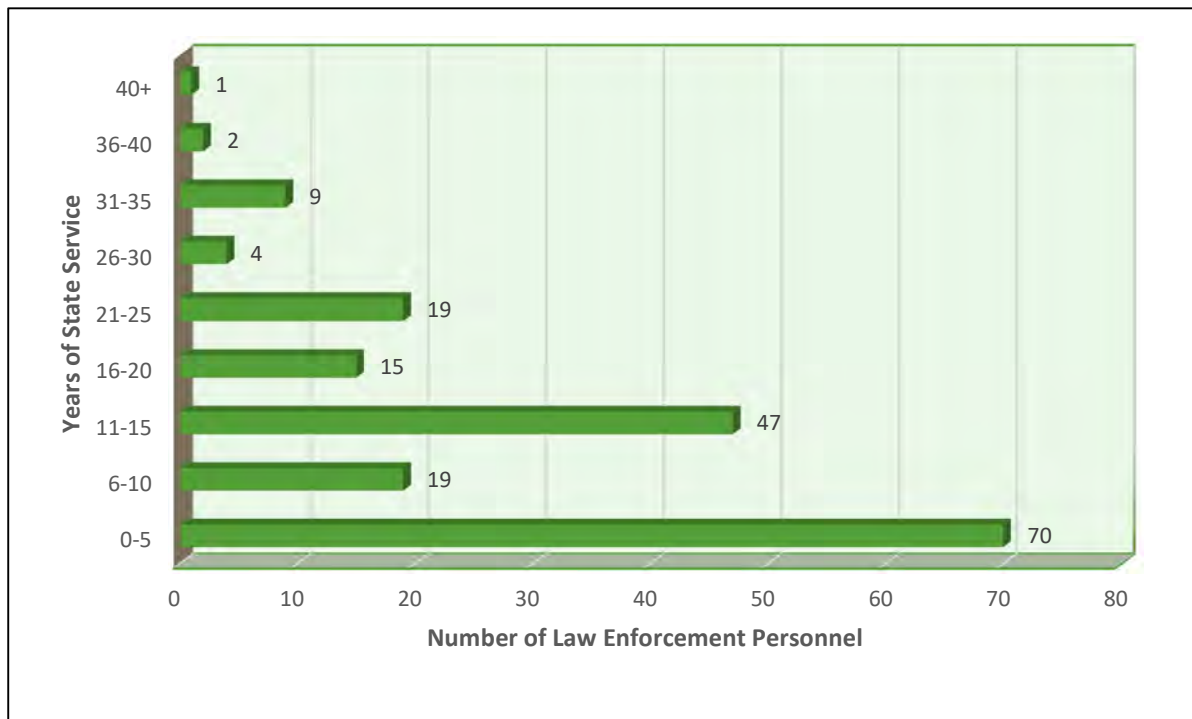


Table 9: Law Enforcement Personnel Years of Service Milestones in 2019

5 YEARS	15 YEARS	25 YEARS	30 YEARS
CPO BENJAMIN BOYETTE	CPO KRISTA ADAMS	SGT BAXTER BELL	CPO MICHAEL ENTSMINGER
CPO JUSTIN CHAMBERS	ANDREA FRISBY, Dispatcher	SGT CHARLES FERGUSON	CAPT ANTHONY FISHER
CPO MICHAEL CORRADO	CPO RICHARD LANDERS	LT CLEGGETT FUNKHOUSER	SGT PAUL ATKINS
CPO JOEL EARLY	ROBERT SCHMIDT, IT	SGT STEPHEN GARVIS	
CPO CHRISTOPHER GILMORE	CPO JONATHAN SIMMONS	MAJOR SCOTT NAFF	
SGT DAVID KEENE			
CPO JOSEPH MANSPILE			
CPO ALBERTO MEDINA			
CPO DANIEL NEWTON			
CPO STEPHEN RITCHIE			
CPO TYLER SHEETS			
CPO DANIEL SMITH			
CPO JOSHUA FISHER			

## 7.6 Retirees

Since January 2019, Law Division has seen the retirements of Lt. Karl P. Martin (47 years of service), Elmo W. Herndon (34 years of service), William (Shannon) Smith (26 years of service) and Sgt. Jeffery L. McCuiston (22 years of service).



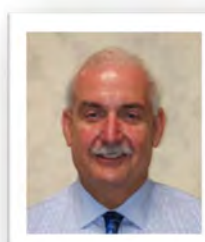
Lt. Karl P. Martin  
2/14/1972 to 4/1/2019  
(47 years of service)



Elmo W. Herndon  
11/5/1985 to 12/1/2019  
(34 years of service)



Wm (Shannon) Smith  
2/24/1994 to 11/1/2019  
(26 years of service)



Sgt. Jeffery L. McCuiston  
7/21/1997 to 8/25/2019  
(22 years of service)



## IN MEMORIAM – RECENTLY FALLEN RETIREES

### **Captain Jennings Whitmer** 1/19/2019 (age 94)

He was born on September 6, 1924 in West Virginia. He served in the United States Army in both World War II and Korea, receiving three bronze stars in each war. He worked for the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries as a Game Warden until his retirement in 1986 retiring as a Captain. He was the youngest to ever be promoted that position.



### **Lieutenant Jesse Updike** 2/25/2019 (age 84)

He was born on June 27, 1934 in Front Royal, Virginia. Jesse worked for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for 28 years (served from 9/10/1962 - 8/31/1990), retiring as a Game Warden Lieutenant. He had also worked as a Federal Game Warden for a period of several years. He was a U.S. Air Force veteran during the Korean War, a member of F.O.P., the N.R.A., and the Isaac Walton League.



### **Sergeant David Ramsey** 3/29/2019 (age 91)

He was born on January 7, 1928 in Buena Vista, Virginia. In 1962, Dave became a Game Warden in Frederick County (served from 8/1/1962 - 8/1/1991) and he retired as a Sergeant with 29 years of public service. As a Game Warden, he became well known in the area for his passion for his work as well as his support for agriculture and conservation. He was named the Wildlife Officer of the Year in 1982.



**Captain Jim Wilson** 12/03/2019 (age 90)

James Cecil "Jim" Wilson, 90 of Tazewell, VA died Tuesday, December 3, 2019 at his home. Born July 1, 1929 at Caretta, WV, he was a son of the late John Dewie Wilson and Ollie E. Kiser Wilson. He was a 1947 graduate of Honaker High School and a US Air Force Veteran. Mr. Wilson was a member of Tazewell Christian Church and the North Tazewell Lions Club. He was a longtime employee of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, working through the ranks and retiring in 1991 as the Region III Captain.



Day's End, Heading Home  
DAY'S END, HEADING HOME

Annual Report Compiled by  
Gary Sargent, Law Enforcement Division,  
With Submissions and Assistance from Many

*All photos in this report were contributed by DGIF staff*

## 8.0 Office Locations

### Headquarters (Henrico)

7870 Villa Park Drive, Suite 400 (Villa Park 3)  
P.O. Box 90778, Henrico, VA 23228-0778  
Henrico, VA 23228  
Hours: Mon–Fri, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM  
Phone: 804-367-1000



### Region 1 Office (Charles City)

3801 John Tyler Memorial Hwy  
Charles City, VA 23030  
Hours: Mon–Fri, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM  
Phone: 804-829-6580



### Region 2 Office (Forest)

1132 Thomas Jefferson Rd  
Forest, VA 24551  
Hours: Mon–Fri, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM  
Phone: 434-525-7522



### Region 3 Office (Marion)

1796 Highway Sixteen  
Marion, VA 24354  
Hours: Mon–Fri, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM  
Phone: 276-783-4860



### Region 4 Office (Verona)

517 Lee Highway  
Verona, VA 24482  
P.O. Box 996, Verona, VA 24482  
Hours: Mon–Fri, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM  
Phone: 540-248-9360



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